

I rise in support of H.R. 5481, which Mrs. Capps has brought before us, that would grant subpoena powers to the Presidential Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Our Nation is in the midst of a great environmental disaster of historic scale--tens of thousands of barrels gushing into the gulf, hundreds of miles of coast line contaminated, thousands of people suffering from the economic impact. With today's news that the cap has been removed, this environmental catastrophe continues only to get worse.

BP has not been forthcoming over the past months--not forthcoming in what they were doing or how it was done or how much oil was gushing out and on and on and on. We owe it to the American people that they have an answer for what has happened; why it has happened; how it will be brought under control; what actions are being taken to prevent future spills. We can't let corporate prevarication and delay and feigned ignorance stand in the way.

I support the President's action in creating a commission to determine the answers to these questions. And as the commission begins to investigate the spill in the coming weeks, we must ensure that it has the tools necessary to succeed. Granting the commission subpoena powers will ensure that they undertake a complete inquiry on the causes of the spill and make meaningful recommendations on how to prevent similar disasters. I urge support.

I also want to point out that we need to ensure that the responsible parties are held accountable for the economic damages they've caused. The Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act, which has the support of nearly a fifth of this body, would raise the liability limit for economic damages from the laughably small \$75 million. It's my hope that Congress will also act on this important legislation in the near future.